

Chairwomen Gerratana and Johnson and other members of the Joint Committee on Public Health

Thank you in advance for accepting my testimony.

My name is Pablo Soto, I want to first commend you in this quest to find a reasonable solution for a problem that is plaguing our cities, our states and our nation. The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School has spawn many issues and many debates, I can imagine that it is not easy to come up with an easy a solution, however it is important that any recommendation be made not in a hastily fashion but a thoughtful one, that would be effective and without other secondary unintended consequences.

Mental health is a big factor in violent crimes such as what happen in Sandy Hook, and it definitely deserves attention, as a matter of fact it deserves a great deal of scrutiny. However there is a responsibility when dealing with these issues and providing a solution, we need to make sure they are effective, factual, and appropriate and that it does not violate the rights and privacy of individuals.

I believe this bill does the opposite, having a behavioral assessment perform by a public official on public grounds with well meaning intention to maintain confidentiality, may provide the ability of the assessment being leaked, shared or stolen, violating the privacy rights of parents and children, furthermore having a behavioral health assessment of home school children and or having the assessment done on children without parental notification or consent violates parental rights and the 4th amendment of the constitution against illegal search and seizures, as we don't not know what kind of questions are being incorporated of such assessment. The effectiveness and factual element of an assessment provided in through a public official and or on public grounds is debatable, these assessment can arbitrary and artificially be skewed by public official and personnel.

As an alternative, recommendation can be made by school officials based on visual observations of certain behaviors, and provide the resources for parents to seek behavioral health related services.

Respectfully,

Pablo Soto
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